

Communications system having roaming facilities.

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5 The invention relates to a communications system, comprising several communications networks, and means for facilitating roaming for users on said several communications networks.

10 It is known that PLMN operators [PLMN = Public Land Mobile Network] mutually conclude roaming agreements. Such agreements, which regulate that subscribers of one PLMN may, and can, make use of another PLMN (this is called roaming) so far must always be gone into bilaterally between the several PLMN operators mutually. In addition, technical provisions which make all this possible, such as coupling network signalings, must be undertaken bilaterally. In this manner, roaming additionally is possible only between different PLMNs, but not between PLMNs and PSTNs (= Public Switched Telephone Networks).

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

20 It is the object of the invention to overcome said drawbacks. To this end, the invention provides for operators of telecommunications networks, i.e., PLMNs or PSTNs, to each conclude a bilateral roaming agreement with a global communications network - to which a satellite-communications network (= SCN) is particularly suited - and that in doing so the technical means are provided for realising said agreement. By way of only one agreement, namely, by the SCN, each PLMN or PSTN, as the case may be, receives roaming facilities with all other PLMNs and PSTNs which have also concluded such an agreement with the SCN. The telecommunications network concluding an agreement with the SCN should, for the purpose of realising said agreement, bring about a signalling coupling with the SCN. The SCN then provides signalling links with all telecommunications networks with which a roaming agreement has been concluded as well. There is therefore required only one signalling link with the SCN to obtain roaming with all networks connected to the SCN. The invention is based on the insight that an SCN, apart from as a platform for satellite communication, due to its far-reaching global setup and arrangement, is extremely suitable as a roaming platform ("facilitator") for different PLMNs and PSTNs.

40 --This application is a U.S. National Phase Application under 35 USC 371 of International Application PCT/EP00/03096 (published in English) filed April 7, 2000.--